

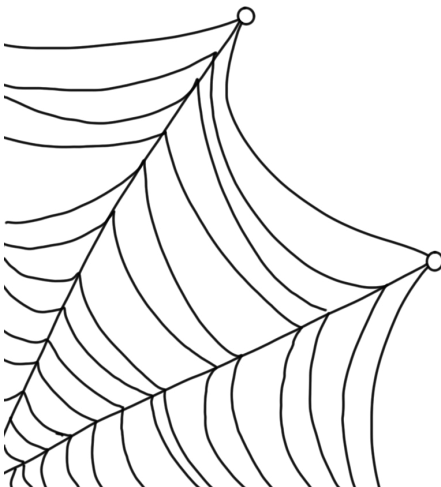
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**WOMEN**

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**ISSUE 55  
VOLUME 4**

**Halloween Edition**

! Haunted Campus !



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Front Cover: Shanti Franzoni

Back Cover: Alex Robinson

Submissions are due always, constantly, so submit forever. You can submit in any format (no PDFs please) by CD, Flash Drive, singing telegram, carrier pigeon, paper airplane, Fed-Ex, Pony Express, or email. Get your submissions to omen@hampshire.edu, the Omen Office, Leo's mailbox (1593), or Jay's mailbox (0370).

## Policy

The Omen is a bimonthly publication that is the world's only example of the consistent application of a straightforward policy: we publish all signed submissions from members of the Hampshire community that are not libelous. Send us your impassioned yet poorly-thought-out rants, self-insertion fan fiction, MS Paint comics, and whiny emo poetry: we'll publish it all, and we're happy to do it. The Omen is about giving you a voice, no matter how little you deserve it. Since its founding in December of 1992 by Stephanie Cole, the Omen has hardly ever missed an issue, making it Hampshire's longest-running publication.

Your Omen submission (you're submitting right now, right?) might not be edited, and we can't promise any spellchecking either, so any horrendous mistakes are your fault, not ours. We do promise not to insert comical spelling mistakes in submissions to make you look foolish.

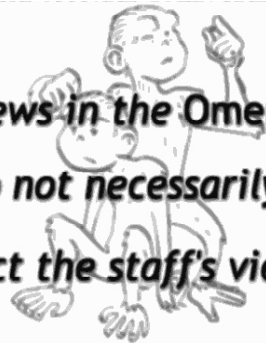
Your submission must include the name you use around campus: an open forum comes with a responsibility to take ownership of your views. (Note: Views expressed in the Omen do not necessarily reflect the views of the Omen editor, the Omen staff, or anyone, anywhere, living or dead.)

The Omen staff consists of whoever shows up for Omen layout, which usually takes place on alternate Thursday nights in the basement of Merrill in the company of a computer with an extremely inadequate monitor. You should come. We don't bite. You can find the Omen on other Thursdays in Saga, the post office, online at <http://expelallo.men>, and just about any other place we can find to put it.

**Views in the Omen (5)**

**Do not necessarily (7)**

**Reflect the staff's views (5)**



## EDITORIAL

# SCANDAL! COLLEGE PRESIDENT DESTROYING CAMPUS PROPERTY?\*

*AN EXCLUSIVE LOOK INTO THE TWISTED AFFAIRS OF PRESIDENT WINGENBACH*

Isaiah Woods, Interim Editor

Without reading the Hampshire College constitution (as I have better things to do), I can state with relative confidence that it is campus legislature, that once elected to the position, the mind, body and soul of the Hampshire college president are officially property of the Hampshire College community. Now it may seem on the surface like president Wingenbawk is respecting his role in the community as Hampshire property, however, through many hours of painstaking research\*, I came to the shocking conclusion that this may not be the case.

These scandalous goings-on first came to my attention when I saw president Winganbok on two separate occasions at the very start of the school year. To my shock and horror, on these two occasions, Ed appeared to have undergone some sort of a “transformation”. His face... it was different. It had less hair than it did when he gave his start-of-the-year speech. How this may have come about, I wasn’t completely sure, but I knew something was going on. After extensive digging, I came to a shocking conclusion: Ed Wynginbach, the PRESIDENT of Hampshire College, had SHAVED HIS FACE during the fiscal semester. This may seem to be rather inconsequential at first glance, but working under the presumption that Ed is technically school property, unless he SPECIFICALLY took the time to preserve every single follicle of hair from his face, and submit it to the bursar, he is TECHNICALLY destroying school property. I was as shocked as you are. I mean whats next? Embezzlement? Arson? The possibilities are endless.

But this is just the tip of the iceberg. If president Wingybox has illicitly defaced and destroyed Hampshire property, who’s to say that he hasn’t done it before (Or in turn won’t do it again)? An inside source (who will remain anonymous for their own safety) has alerted me that this is hardly a new occurrence. They informed me that “Ed” (If that’s even his real name) made a habit of clipping his fingernails and washing his hands. The fact that these heinous acts are allegedly regular occurrences is incredibly troubling.

As I’m sure all of our readers are well aware, Hampshire College has on many occasions voiced its commitment to sustainability. The sheer hypocrisy presented here is beyond repugnant. How can an institution with ideologies so strongly routed in environmentalism and sustainability, be under the administration of such a complete and utter squanderer of crucial resources. I have thus far been presented with no evidence that there have been any attempts on the presidents behalf to preserve and submit any of his nail clippings or dead skin cells for composting purposes. According to my calculations,

if he HAD made the effort to preserve such deposits as college owned fertilizer, the Hampshire College farm would be able to produce ONE WHOLE potato more than they did this past year. If you aren't already enraged, I urge you to please reevaluate your priorities.

Now, if ALL of this evidence is not enough to convince you of Ed Wimbledonbroccoli's nefarious doings, I would like to leave you with one final, irrefutable piece of evidence PROVING that he is thoughtlessly destroying college property: Ed is constantly urinating and Defecating in off campus locations. Not only is this the case, but he has AN ENTIRE OFF CAMPUS PROPERTY where he disposes of these precious resources with no regard for how the campus could make use of said resources. Now, he calls this place his "house" which on the surface appears to be completely fine. HOWEVER, according to my knowledge of the Hampshire constitution (which is near to none), the college president is permitted to lodge off of campus, but to my knowledge, it is stated nowhere in the constitution that they may indulge in bodily evacuations in an off campus facility. Now you may be thinking: What's the big deal? And to that I respond that this is plain out ROBBERY! Yes, these fleshly deposits may seem worthless to the ignorant peasant, but this is not a matter of money. No, this is a moral infraction, rather than a financial one. When the president is able to defecate with complete and utter freedom, do you really even have a college anymore? The very integrity of the institution is threatened by a storm of amoral tumult. This is why I URGE all students to take a stand and to fight against the despotism that plagues our institution, and to email Ed Wingenbahviubihfbhhjbdhjhbhchdghabhdhfbasbdhf at omen@hampshire.edu with the #stopthesteal.

Goodbye for now, and remember loyal readers: #StayWoke.

*\* Please note: No fact checking or research was done in the composition of this article  
Pls don't expel me, Ed ;(*

## ***NEXT WEEK:***

Zaayah Waite: How the hell does she manage to be everywhere at once? 🐑

# SECTION SPEAK

## Write Like a Fiddler

By Jay Poggi

*Where the hell is the Recital Hall?* I thought, looking at a door labeled “Recital Hall.”

*Oh.*

I walked in. Becky greeted me in her low-key, friendly way. A stranger holding a mandolin greeted me in a high-key, friendly way. I introduced myself timidly and learned her name which I have since forgotten, and that she was a chiropractor, which I have not. I sat and opened my case like it was my first time, my fingers slipping on the latch and fumbling with the zippers. I took out the cartoon-red student’s instrument and stared at it for a moment, reckoning with the task I was about to undertake: today, I would teach my violin to be a fiddle.

Others joined us: first, a cheerful, mandolin-playing science professor from Mount Holyoke; then a wizened fiddler who seemed far too crunchy to have taught *math* of all things at *UMass* of all places; finally, two Mount Holyoke students arrived, each bearing fiddles and shy silence. As Becky introduced us to each other, my suspicions were confirmed: my intermediately skilled, classically trained self sat among folk music masters.

I wasn’t worried—at least, most of me wasn’t. Becky had made clear that this ensemble welcomed folk music first-timers. Probably 99% of me wasn’t worried, but that remaining 1% sure as hell was. And it couldn’t just sit quietly with its dissenting opinion, no. It had to make a scene.

*Oh my God. We’re going to look so stupid. What if we can’t learn the song? What if we play out of tune and it messes everyone else up? What if everyone realizes we have no real musical talent but they’re too nice to say anything? What if—*

1% of me continued like that with phonetic articulation so fast it would have killed Scatman Jones.

This wasn’t the first time I’d had to deal with an anxiety attack. Hell, it probably wasn’t the first time that day. It was, however, the first time I’d had to deal with an anxiety attack while playing music in front of strangers who were hilariously better than me, and the novelty of the experience meant my guard was down.

Becky started taking us through the first song. Folk musicians learn by ear rather than with sheet music, so Becky taught us with an instrumental call-and-response. We repeated after her, a bar or two at a time, until we had learned the entire song. As I regurgitated Becky’s notes, 99% of me remarked that, hey, this was pretty doable! Sure it took me a couple more tries than everyone else to get it right, but I was definitely keeping up. Meanwhile, 1% of me wailed like the world’s least lovable baby, whining about how much we “sucked.” I didn’t care, but only 1% of me needs to be anxious for my body to react. My throat tightened. My limbs went leaden and lethargic. My head felt like an over-inflated balloon. Still, as we started the song in full, 99% of me made *all* of me play.

It was hard. Playing one measure at a time was one thing, but playing them back-to-back required dexterity that I just hadn’t developed. Yet so seasoned were the skills of my fellow players that they could



effortlessly improvise over the breakneck melody, adding fancy flourishes and rad harmonies wherever their intuition told them to. That gave me an idea. If they could add complexity with their improvisations, why couldn't I reduce it? I focused on the most crucial notes—the longest ones, the highs and lows of each phrase—and I ignored any rhythms too quick for my fingers to handle. 99% of me realized it was working. *Yes!* they cheered. *Look at us, we're actually playing with everyone! This is awesome!* The 1% pounded on my lungs like a total asshole. I fought back, taking huge gulps of air, so huge that I was forgetting to exhale. A warm tingle ignited at my fingertips, then spread past my palms and wrists until my forearms were sleepily ablaze. *Oh cool*, thought 99% of me, *we're hyperventilating*.

Becky gave me “the hairy eyeball,” a signal she had devised to alert us when it was our turn to sing. I'd forgotten we had to sing. The 1% shrieked like a choir of tone-deaf knives. I felt blood in my ears. The 99% pried open my mouth.

I sang.

*Woah*, I mused, and it was all 100% of me now. *I feel way better*.

I did feel better. The tingling had dissolved. My throat had opened. I felt the weariness lift out my body like mist. Singing is basically just fancy exhaling. In other words, it's the perfect antidote to hyperventilation.

We finished the song with a cathartic major chord. Becky told me I'd done a great job keeping up. All of me believed her.

We played three more songs after that. Partway through, two more students joined the jam, both just as mind-blowingly gifted as the others. I wasn't worried. At this point, I'd realized none of them were worried about me either.

And why would they be? They were folk musicians. They didn't join this ensemble to impress or be impressed. They joined because they love playing music. I didn't need to be good for them to enjoy the music we made together.

This realization clashed so hard with my classical violinist's way of thinking, it gave my brain whiplash. Even with as supportive and patient a violin teacher as I have, learning classical music inevitably becomes an exercise in perfection. The “joy of music” becomes a bit of an afterthought when one has spent so much time meticulously micromanaging every muscle in their body so that they might become a vessel through which an ancient German ghost can deliver its convoluted masterpiece.

I thought about this as I walked back to my room. I recognized that I have struggled with perfectionism in practically all of my creative pursuits since middle school taught me how to be self conscious. Perfectionism has infected the way I think about my art and my games, but nowhere has it made me sicker than in how I think about my writing.

I hardly bother doing it anymore. I dismiss most of the ideas that drift through my head before I even give them the chance to materialize on a page. Sometimes I come up with reasons. I'll decide the story is too complicated, boring, or difficult to be worth writing. Most of the time, though, I kill ideas reflexively, with no justification other than a dull insistence that I'm just a bad writer.

Opening the door to Merrill, the ensemble's music still loud in my ears, I remembered how it felt to write when I was 13. I remembered the nonchalance with which I had let words flow from my brain to the tips of my fingers. I remembered my excitement, my persistence. I remembered how much fun I used to have. Why wasn't writing fun anymore?

Couldn't it be?

In retrospect, letting go of my violinist's perfectionism hadn't been so hard. I'd just had to become something else: a fiddler. If I could fiddle musically, couldn't I fiddle with words? All I'd need is a group of establishment defying, tradition eschewing writers to play along with.

That sounds a lot like The Omen, I thought.

I know what you're thinking: "There was a point to all this?" Yes, there was, but don't get used to it. The point is, starting with the issue you are holding in your hands (or beholding on a screen), The Omen will be my literary fiddle group. I will publish a piece of writing in every issue of The Omen printed while I am a living Hampshire College student. The work I publish will *not* be good, and I will *not* care. I mean really, who wants to be "good" at something anyway? I'd much rather be "weird" at something, or hell, even "interestingly bad" at it.

I invite anyone else who struggles to get themselves to write to join me. The Omen is the safest place I can think of for this sort of endeavor. Like the ensemble, none of us are here to impress or be impressed. Perhaps unlike the ensemble, we're here because we have unruly garbage stinking up our brains, and we have a sick obsession with dumping it someplace where others can smell it. I should end this thing before my metaphors become so derangedly mixed, language itself loses all meaning.

Omenites: let's slouch our shoulders, un-straighten our backs, and write like fiddlers. 🤖

## Submit and Win a Finely Aged Can of Crisco!

By Nicholas Utakis-Smith

This jar of Crisco is reportedly 2 ½ years old! It currently has no owner, and is up for grabs! Submit to [omen@hampshire.edu](mailto:omen@hampshire.edu) with your name and email describing why YOU should be the rightful owner of the aged Crisco jar, and your argument will be published, and if it is good enough, you will be contacted with information on how to receive your Crisco! 🤖



# How to Revive Deathfest (Part III)

by Ethan Ludwin-Peery F09, FST F10, & Alex V F10

## Stat Block

Deathfest is based on a simple d20 system. If you've played D&D or another d20 game, then you know roughly what we mean, but let's take a minute to spell it out.

The basic idea of a d20 system is that whenever a character wants to do something that involves any challenge — eating a sandwich is not a challenge (unless it's VERY big), but throwing a sandwich at your math teacher is — they roll a twenty-sided die (d20) and their success or failure is determined by how high the roll is. If you roll a 19 or a 20 you have almost certainly succeeded. If you roll a 1 or 2 you have almost certainly failed.

If you roll somewhere in between, then it depends. Whatever you are trying to do, the DM should determine the difficulty class ("DC") of the check, probably a number between 2 and 19. Low numbers mean the thing is easy to accomplish, high numbers mean the thing is hard to accomplish. You might only have to roll an 11 to hit your sluggish math teacher with a sandwich, but it might take a roll of 17 to hit your spritely gym teacher. If you roll equal to or higher than the DC, you do whatever you were trying to do. If you roll lower, you fail.

Usually you are not just rolling a d20, though, because most rolls are affected by modifiers. Modifiers can come from anywhere. The DM can give modifiers ("The puffy coat you found gives you a +2 on all rolls to not get frozen!"), modifiers can come from your abilities ("You get a +1 to all rolls when attacking birds."), or from anywhere else. But most of the time modifiers come from a character's attributes, from a character's saves, or from a character's attacks.

Every character has six attributes. Each attribute has a modifier which is applied to any roll related to that ability — you add or subtract the relevant modifier to the roll.

Strength modifies rolls that involve raw physical power.

Dexterity modifies rolls that involve quickness and coordination.

Constitution modifies rolls that involve toughness and resilience.

Intelligence modifies rolls that involve thinking and problem-solving.

Wisdom modifies rolls that involve perception and common sense.

Charisma modifies rolls that involve social skills and force of personality.

If you roll a 15 on an attempt to make a friend, and have a -1 charisma, you add the modifier to your roll and get a 14, etc. If you want to game the system, you could instead lift a car off a kitten with your +3 strength to impress someone, and potentially make friends without having to use your charisma stat — if you can talk the DM into it.

Modifiers generally range from -1 to +3. Every character should have some good attributes (+2 or +3) and at least one bad attribute (-1 or +0). The rest should usually be +1's.

At one point we asked that all attribute modifiers add up to 7. Normally this would look something like +3 +2 +2 +1 +0 -1 (total: +7), but it also allows DMs to get wacky with the arithmetic — a -5 in charisma and a +10 in strength, for example, as long as all six modifiers add up to +7.

The idea here is you can build a "glass cannon" which auto-fails all rolls in one area and auto-wins in another. This can be fun! But it does set up



situations to “break” the game, so you should only do so if you know you can plan around players’ auto-win and auto-lose rolls, so it doesn’t get too easy or too discouraging. The same principle applies to the modifiers we discuss below. Like most of character building, you’re trying to set your players up to make big choices, so outlining what their character can and can’t do by nudging their stats in one direction can help — classic examples would be a wizard who has high intelligence and low wisdom, or a circus strongman with high charisma and strength but low dexterity and intelligence.

Each character has three saves. These are special modifiers to be used reactively in response to different kinds of danger, to get out of sticky situations. The DM or the relevant ability will tell you what kind of save to use and how high you need to roll to avoid danger. If you roll high enough you avoid whatever it was and come out fine. If you roll below you suffer the consequences. Add your relevant modifiers after you roll.

Fortitude saves are the save equivalent to constitution. If you need to resist a poison or disease, hold your breath, or keep your lunch down, the DM might call for a fortitude save.

Reflex saves are the save equivalent to dexterity. If you need to react to danger quickly, get out of the way, or catch something coming in fast, the DM might call for a reflex save.

Will saves are the save equivalent to wisdom. If you need to engage in a battle of raw mental power, resist getting hypnotized or magically entranced, or try to avoid the lure of one more cup of coffee, the DM might call for a will save.

Save modifiers usually range from +0 to +4. A common combination is one save having +4 and the other two having +2, but you can mess with that — +1 / +3 / +4 is fine, as is +2 / +3 / +3, etc.

There is also an initiative modifier. This is usually between +1 and +4, and is really just an indicator of how fast the character is. This is used when the DM needs to figure out who goes first. A common use in Deathfest is when multiple characters want to loot a body for their equipment (see below) — the DM calls for an initiative check and whoever rolls highest gets the loot.

Finally, all characters have two attacks. These are distinct from the abilities, although most abilities also do damage. They do not contain much flavor text. One is a melee attack you can only use up close, and one is a ranged attack you can use from afar. These attacks should definitely be appropriate for the character and should preferably be silly. These could be “Knife to meet you” for a Cutco salesman, or “Combat Scone” for a violent baker, for example.

Each attack has a modifier — when you attack with this attack, this is the modifier you add to the roll to hit your target. Usually one of these is +2 and the other one is +4. You can bend this a little — +1 and +5 would be ok sometimes.

Each attack also does damage. The attack with the higher modifier should do less damage because otherwise players will just use that attack every time — the easier it is to hit, the less damage should result, as a rule of thumb. Damage is defined by damage dice. This can be kind of whatever you want, as long as the damage isn’t so high it would kill a character in one shot (it should be very unlikely or impossible to deal 20+ damage). Here are some examples — 1d10 (roll one 10-sided dice, that’s the damage you did), 2d6+1 (roll two six-sided dice, add them together, and add one, that’s the damage you did), 2d8, 3d4+1, 1d8+2, 2d10, etc.

Attacks also have a critical range and modifier. This is really a legacy feature from D&D but it does make strange things happen sometimes so it’s probably worth keeping. In every case it should basically say “if your die shows this (20) multiply by this! (x2)” This means if a character rolls a 20 on the die (without modifiers) when making an attack, they automatically hit and they deal twice the damage they would otherwise. If you really want to, you can make the threat range 19-20 on a few attacks, but you really should keep this rare.

All characters are “Level 5”. This means nothing.

Hit Points – These are a measure of how healthy and alive a character is. When a character has zero (or negative) hit points, that character is dead.

Most characters start with between 18 and 22 hit points. Especially squishy characters might start out with fewer, especially tough characters with more. Most of the time, however, keep it close to 20 HP. We don't want huge differences between how long different characters live, so these small differences are more of a way to communicate how tough the character is overall. If you do make a character have very few HP, they need to have some sort of ability to make up for it. If you give them a ton of HP, you should give them some major weaknesses.

AC – This stands for “Armor Class” and is a measure of how hard a character is to hit in combat. If you try to smack them with a 2x4 or shoot them with an ink gun, how likely are you to succeed? In game terms, this is the DC you need to roll with an attack. If you roll equal to or above someone's AC, you hit them and deal damage, if not, you miss.

Most of the time, ACs should range from 12 (easy to hit) to 16 (hard to hit). “AC” is another legacy term — you can think of all kinds of reasons a character might be tough to hit besides armor. They might be small, agile, much further away than they appear, etc.

But realistically the main rule is that characters with high hit points should have low ACs and vice-versa. Someone very tough shouldn't be too hard to hit, and someone hard to hit shouldn't be too tough. If you give a character lots of HP and a high AC, you better give them some big weaknesses. If you give them very little HP and a low AC, they had better have other great ways to defend themselves.

No matter how many hours you spend building a character, it ultimately belongs to the player, who will find and invent ways to surprise you. You might imagine a Suffragette character you create using her ‘fists of justice’ attack and her +3 wisdom to be a paragon of good deeds, but maybe this player turns her into a bank robber. Work with, not against, your players' interpretations — the stat block is a guide, not a law.

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In addition to their boring number-filled stats, characters also get a number of zany, exciting abilities. Every character should get 3-5 abilities. These come in a number of flavors. Usually each character gets one passive or flavor ability, a couple X per Tier abilities, and one Once per Deathfest ability, though you can mix it up a little.

## Passive/Flavor Abilities

These are a great place to put the “hook” described above. Deathfest is after all a roleplaying tournament, and while we don't want to force our players to roleplay in a particular way, we do want to encourage it. The good news is that most players do not need much convincing, just a nudge in the right direction.

The “Cannibal Princess” character Ethan once introduced, for example, had a passive ability called “Pretty Pretty Princess”, which read “Gain a +1 to Charisma as long as you act with proper courtly etiquette.” A +1 to Charisma is not much of a bonus, but it encourages the player to play the character in a certain way, and gives them a small reward for doing so. If they decide to play the Cannibal Princess in a different direction, though, they're free to do so.

Passive abilities can also influence the rest of the Tier. For example, a drinking-game-themed character might have a passive ability called “Taboo”, where they can choose a word that is tabooed for the Tier, and if anyone says that word, they take 1 point of damage. As mentioned above, abilities that affect so many people and have out-of-game requirements (speaking in a certain way) should be used cautiously.

These abilities can even be negative, either to encourage a player to not act in a certain way, or as a gag. One time Ethan made a character named “Stark Tony, the Man Iron”, a robot wrapped in a flesh suit. Because Tony Stark, the Iron Man, loves alcohol, I made Stark Tony hate it, and gave

him a passive ability that made him take 1d4 damage whenever he drank or even touched alcohol. I intended this as a gag, but when we got to my diner-themed Tier II, the player who got Stark Tony forgot about this ability, ordered a whiskey, drank it, took 1d4 damage, and died.

Finally, these can just be for flavor, or just be jokes. One character had an ability that was simply, “you are exceptionally talented at seeing eagles”. Players will usually find a way to make these things count.

## X per Tier

X per Tier (sometimes x/tier) abilities are abilities that you can use a certain number of times per Tier — for example, a 1/tier ability can be used once per tier, a 2/tier ability can be used twice per tier, and so on. The number of uses should be related to how powerful the ability is. A 1/tier ability can only be used a maximum of three times in that Deathfest, so it should be pretty powerful. A 3/tier ability can be used a lot, and shouldn't be too strong or too wild.

Most characters will only get 3 or 4 turns in a given tier. If they die early on, they will probably get fewer. Therefore we recommend that you not give more than three uses of an ability per tier, i.e. no 4/tier or 5/tier or higher.

The standard is one weaker 3/tier ability and one stronger 1/tier ability, or two decent 2/tier abilities, but feel free to bend this one.

If the passive abilities are the hook for a character, these are the bread and butter. Whatever the character does needs to be represented in these abilities. If the character is a cook, they need to have abilities that let them cook. If they are a firefighter, they need to have firefighter abilities. If they are a man trapped inside a vending machine, they need to be able to make change and vend things.

These need to be abilities that the player WANTS TO USE. For a player to want to use an ability, they need to have a sense of what will happen when they use the ability. While a random element can be fun, abilities that are really random take away the sense of agency. “Use this ability and the DM will give you a surprise!” is not a good ability. The ability also needs to be likely to benefit them. If you give a character an ability that hurts them, they probably won't use it.

They also need to be abilities that the player is likely to be ABLE TO USE. Having an ability that activates on a trigger (when you take damage, when you make a check to escape something, etc.) is a great idea, but if the triggers are too specific, they may never get a chance to use the ability. Don't give a character an ability that turns mushrooms into people unless you are certain they will encounter lots of mushrooms. Don't give a character an ability that they can only use when someone else gets married, unless you are running a marriage-themed Deathfest. You have to be extra careful of this. Your Tier I and Tier II may be filled with mushrooms, but if the character gets tierported or goes to a deadgame, there's no guarantee that there will be any mushrooms there! Most of the time, triggers should be very broad.

That said, there are ways to make weird triggers engaging. Giving a corporate executive character an ability that says, “3/tier: When someone gives you a handshake, deal 1d6 damage to them and take all of their items” is a great idea. They may never get to use the ability, but they will get to go around and be like, “who wants a nice firm handshake?” or “that sounds like a great plan, let's shake on it.” Probably no one falls for it, but if they do, so much the better.

Also be careful of abilities that force other players to do things. Do not give players mind-control abilities, hypnosis abilities, puppeteer abilities, etc. An ability like “forces target player to drop what they are holding” is ok because it only controls one action, and “convinces target player to be friendly towards you” is ok because it doesn't force the player to behave in any specific way, just to be friendly in general. Don't go much further than that. 🐼

# Correspondence between Alix Ziaja and David Mansfield, author of acclaimed Omen erotica, “The Postman Always Has Sex With You”

Hi,

I’m currently writing from The Omen office and we are going through some older editions and found your mailman piece. It has brought much joy. I have a few follow up questions to do a where are they now kind of thing.

1. There is quite a bit of world building in such a short piece, what was your source of inspiration for the piece?
2. How did winning this erotica competition 14 years ago affect your life at the time and how has it affected you since?
3. What are you doing now?
4. If you could tell your college self one thing what would it be??

Thank you for your time,  
Alix Ziaja

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Hi Alix,

I am stunned and delighted to learn that my old writing is still finding readers! This message made my day, and also sparked a minor identity crisis (“Why don’t I write stuff like that anymore? What have I become?” etc.). So thank you! I would be glad to answer your questions. If you print any of my answers, I’d also love it if you could link to my website and Instagram, if that feels okay -- [davidmansfieldart.com](http://davidmansfieldart.com) and [@davidmansfieldart](https://www.instagram.com/davidmansfieldart), respectively.

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## **1. There is quite a bit of world building in such a short piece, what was your source of inspiration for the piece?**

I’m pretty sure that any world building in this piece is strictly the result of trying to disorient the reader. I’m a sucker for stories that poke little holes in a reader’s assumptions about the rules of the world they’re reading about. Casually dropping in an absurd detail is a great way to both build out a world and cause a reader to lose their footing, the latter of which has always been a key part of my sense of humor.

The biggest influence on most of my Omen writing was Jack Handey. He’s best known for writing “Deep Thoughts” for Saturday Night Live in the 90s, but he’s also done some longer comedy essays for various publications over the years.

**2. How did winning this erotica competition 14 years ago affect your life at the time and how has it affected you since?**

The prize, if I remember correctly, was a \$20 gift certificate to Oh My in Northampton. At the time the idea of buying something from a sex shop was still novel and thrilling -- I don't think I'd even been into one except to gawk and make jokes with friends. I certainly hadn't been to one like Oh My, which leaned into sensuality and actual pleasure instead of novelty 4-foot dildos and walls of trashy porn DVDs. I went to Oh My a bunch in the years after that, and my approach to sexuality now is a lot closer to the unashamed, open tone set by Oh My than it was before. I think I probably would have made it here eventually, but winning a gift card that sent me into Oh My certainly sped up that process.

**3. What are you doing now?**

Good question! Before the pandemic I was working as a preschool teacher and moonlighting as a yet-unpublished novelist. But the preschool closed, and I had a kid last September, so I guess my best answer is that I am currently a stay-at-home dad with literary ambitions. I also do illustration and comics here and there, and I'm hoping to get back to doing more of that as my son gets more and more independent.

**4. If you could tell your college self one thing what would it be??**

I would tell myself that humor and good intent don't justify an oppressive joke. For a long time my sense of humor involved a lot of saying fucked up things ironically, knowing that it would make my friends laugh and that they would know I didn't actually mean what I was saying. My intent was always to make fun of people who would say those things unironically, and as long as my audience knew that -- and laughed -- I thought it was okay. I have since come to realize how jokes that voice oppressive points of view still reinforce those points of view, regardless of the context in which they're delivered. People often respond to oppressive jokes by saying, "that's not funny," when they really mean, "that's harmful." I think it has the unintended effect of aligning funny with harmless and unfunny with harmful. But humor is subjective, and plenty of people find toxic, "edgy" jokes hilarious. How funny a joke is doesn't actually have anything to do with how harmful it is. A joke does have to be funny, but you have to also be aware of what that joke will do once it's out in the world, and whether it makes the world a better or worse place for people who have had lives very different from yours. Some jokes should stay in your head, even if they do make you laugh.

This isn't to say people shouldn't make jokes about difficult topics -- simply that it must be done with a lot more care and consideration than I was capable of in college.

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Thanks so much for writing and making me feel all famous for a few days! I'm glad to hear The Omen is still going, and I wish you the best during your time at Hampshire. Those four years were some of the best of my life.

Kind regards,

David 



# Dearest Friends

by Broden Grimm

Dear Hampshire College Friends,

I am writing this letter to all the amazing friends I have made at my first semester at Hampshire College. Einar Davidson has shown me how to have fun at hardcore shows. Robert French has taught me the difference between apples and Oranges. Ida Kao introduced me to the Omen archives. Sula Duncan has shown me new Jazz artists. Bruce Prescott has given me much needed fantasy football advice. Aviva Pusey helped me with my yurt show. Esteban Duran taught me to shit while I can. Wumbo Watson humored me with his eye for film. Ryan Farquhar taught me how to find new animals. Charlie St. John kicked my butt in so many games of pool. Pinko explained to me that the second Weezer is about Elliot Smith's death. Conrad Schweiger once read his book in a funny voice to me. Clive Rudolph has sat behind me valiantly in class. Alex Antunes has shown me where I could take music with enough mastery. Mac Bell has a really good story involving his dad and the poggers you should ask him about. Maya Weiser sends me nice pictures of capybaras. Isaiah Brown shares my hate for land beavers. Sam Weinberg invited me to a frog group chat. Claire Guilly is just like my coolest aunt. Danial Valentin never speaks ill of my name. Raffey Shakoor let me use his own room for dungeons and dragons. Liam Studer earned my vote. Neil Young showed me the show about the show. Annie Richard blew my ears out with their drumming. For you my friends I have but one message, you all smell, please shower more regularly. 🐑

*“Professor is oddly Banana-like.”*

- JAY POGGI 🐑

**“Mrs Eaves is business-like”**

- LEO ZHANG 🐑

**“THIS IS THE BRUH-EST MOMENT OF MY LIFE”**

**-JAY POGGI, AFTER DROPBOX TOOK MINUTES TO**

**CLOSE AND THEN DIDN'T** 🐑



By Erdim Yilmaz 🐑



By Leo Zhang 🐑



# SECTION LIES

## My Chemical Romance Duck AU Fanfiction Found!

A sequel to “Can You Help Me Find This My Chemical Romance Duck Fanfiction?”

By Ida Kao

Do you remember reading Volume 55 Issue 2 a few weeks ago? Do you remember that thing I wrote about that band? You probably do, because there’s no reason for you to read this paragraph without having glanced at the title.

It turns out my memory of this fanfiction was terrible and I got the plot very, very wrong; it was about multiple bands living together as ducks in a body of water, and no one dies. Gerard Way was indeed in it, but he was getting shipped with someone named Frank, not Mikey nor Ray, and the focus was not on his addiction to white bread that led to his death. And I know because someone emailed a link to the fanfiction! The email address it was sent from suggests that this is a prospective student, perhaps stumbling across 55.2 on Instagram or finding a copy of it when they visited campus. I emailed this person back thanking them and asking who they were, because they had sent another email with memes, and I couldn’t put those memes in The Omen if they weren’t part of the Hampshire community, per the editorial policy. I never got a reply, but I would still like to publicly thank them for their contribution!

A snippet from their email I think is worth including:

I haven’t read it so I have no idea if it’s good or not but I do have it. It was originally posted on Livejournal but that journal has since been deleted. That’s probably why Ida couldn’t find it. It was reposted on AO3, though. So here you go!

<https://archiveofourown.org/works/220391>

Have a great day and I hope Ida gets this email.

And finally, we get to what everyone has been waiting for! The full fanfiction in all its glory! Please note that a user on LiveJournal and Archive of Our Own that goes by “sunsetmog” wrote this and not me. To read it, go to <https://tinyurl.com/duckmcr> or use this QR Code:



# Blood

By Nicholas Utakis-Smith

There is blood coming out of my hand.  
There is blood in the sink.

There is blood in a trail leading to my room.  
There is blood on the wall from where I flicked my wrist.

There is blood on the handle of the drawer.  
There is blood on the box of bandages.  
There is blood on both sides of the bandage I am wearing,  
There is blood leaking out from underneath.

There is blood on my bookbag.  
There is blood on my front door.  
There is a trail of blood on the path, spread so thin only I can see it.  
There is blood on the handle of the door to the classroom.  
There is blood on my notebook.  
There is blood in my dinner.  
There is blood in the shower drain.  
There is blood on the new bandage I am wearing.  
There is blood in my bedsheets.  
There is blood in my dreams.

There is blood on my hand when I wake up.  
There is blood on my laptop keyboard.  
There is no blood in my breakfast because I am cautious,  
But there is blood on my silverware and napkin.  
There is blood from all the places where I left it yesterday.  
I try to clean it up,  
But there is now blood in the wipes I tried to clean it with.  
There is blood in the places where I thought I had cleaned. There is blood on the other side of a door  
that has been locked the whole time. There is blood on the wall three stories up. There is blood on the  
ceiling of the gymnasium. There is blood inside of the bottles and packages at the store there is blood  
in the websites I visit on my computer there is blood passing me by outside the window of the bus  
there is blood in the mouths of the birds and insects outside there is blood mixed in with my coffee  
there is blood on the faces of all the people around me.


There is still blood coming out of my hand.  
There is too much blood everywhere,  
except inside of me,  
where there is not enough anymore. 🧸



# New Animals

By Broden Grimm

One is likely to find all sorts of new adventures and experiences when they step foot outside. I have countless new buildings, caves, structures, and mineshafts filled to the brim with metaphorical treasures that I have saved for future use of future generations. While on these outings, I have also come across countless species of new and never before seen animals. Some of them are cute and cuddly, while others are fearsome creatures that invade every crevice of your mind, body, and soul. I have documented all of which I have come across and stored their characteristics deep within the annals of the library which I call my mind. Some of these animals I have not seen for some time and others I see on a weekly basis. Some come from far away lands while others reside closer to me than I would like. Most are bright red hues and very few are completely transparent. However, all of these new animals are worthwhile creatures that must be shared with the public.

A couple of weeks ago I was on a mission to find a new animal located here in Western Massachusetts. I did not know what this animal would look like or what its name was. I knew it was somewhere out there and I would be the one to find it. I was about ten miles away from Hampshire in a truck belonging to a colleague of mine. We were driving along the twisting roads that took us through a tunnel of multicolored autumn leaves. This was a good sign, new animals are attracted to new feelings, we were on the right path. It began to drizzle creating ideal conditions for the appearance of some sort of wet or aquatic creature. Further down the road we came across a wooden structure with no signs serving warnings. Immediately the truck was pulled over to the side of the road, onto the gravel shoulder. We moseyed across the cracked road and wandered onto a trodden down path between a delaptayed wire fence. A slender building with white pillars and a multitude of doors stood before us. It looked like a very small motel that had not been used for decades, all while keeping its inviting aura. It drew me through the tall grass and into its first and only windowless room. Inside was what looked like a fireplace, it felt like a musty garage inside. After thoroughly searching the room, we knew there were no new animals to be found. We worked our way across the outside of the building and the rest of the doors. All we found was locked door after locked door. What we did find was another path leading us to the view of a small waterfall. The sight was beautiful, almost as beautiful as the sight of a new animal. We trekked even further and found the lake that fed the waterfall and surrounded the peninsula we had stepped foot onto. Then once we realised there were no new toads or salamanders to be found at the edge of the lake, we turned around in what we thought was defeat. We sauntered off back onto the gravel trail and next stepped foot onto the road. Out of the corner of my eye I spotted a grey clump of fur on the edge of the road. We quickly made our way over to the creature to hopefully identify what it was. As we were right above it we realised something, it was playing dead. The animal did a really good job at it too, with all the bones sticking out of it. The creature had a pancake shaped body that was engulfed in wet and furry hide. The gelatinous organism looked like it could have been related to a possum. Therefore I dared to dub it “Marsupialbituminemortuus” aka the Gelatinous Possum aka the newest of animals. 



# Animal Heads

Sean Song

Today, we shall learn about Humans. However, we are not talking about their anatomy nor their politics, military tactics, nor some high philosophical ideas that they, as a species, made for themselves. But which part of Humanity shall we look at? The Stone Dwellers era, the Sand Dwellers era or the Steam era? Nay, we shall look at the Digital Stone Tall era defined by their towering stone structures. What are Humans? Humans are bipedal, mostly furless (we think) mammals with the ability to change their heads into the heads of other native species on Earth based on their emotional state. We don't know how they change their heads but the best evidence to support this fact is through the few photographs of Humans in their original, non-animal headed form and the restored digital artifact called "www.DeviantArt.com." This great and particular digital artifact is an archive of photographs of the past or realistic artistic renditions of actual Humans, or expressions of their world. Even with photographs, it is hard to imagine what the daily life of your average Human was like back then, since it was 150,000 years ago. We can only surmise from ancient digital documents and non-corrodible, unburned artifacts. However, with new technologies from the Federation of Extinct Speciology, FES for short, we can recreate what Human life was like before an avoidable star that was close to their planet went nova, leaving a few artifacts spinning through the cosmos on top of asteroids. We can only theorize why they can't avoid it in the first place. The entire species ruled the planet with an iron fist as can be seen by all the digital images. As an entire species, they could have used all of Earth's resources efficiently to relocate their planet or harness their own star as an energy source. Maybe they were not advanced enough on a technical side but this is contradicted with digital artifacts that suggests Humans have a hivemind of immense knowledge? Whether it is by their lack of innovation or mismanagement of their resources, I present the average Human life of Aiden the Human.

As day breaks, the early morning sunlight passes through the crack of his window shades and begins to glare into Aiden's eyes. Like all normal Humans, Aiden rubs his eyes and tosses and turns as he struggles to wake up, flopping around like a fish. And like all Humans, his emotions can shape his head into different animals. His facial features begin to move toward his forehead. Scales start to form on his tanned skin and his brown hair begins to fall out onto his pillow. His eyes widen to the shape of small teacup plates and his eyelids recede into the back of his eyes. His mouth grows wide and then becomes agape. His head now resembles a fish but he still has yet to open his eyes. As he manages to move his head away from the sunbeam, he feels content as he falls back to sleep and his head reverts back to normal with hair and all. Thirty minutes pass by when his alarm goes off, screeching an annoying beeping noise. He extends his arm, trying to hit the alarm.

Slap. He hits his night stand.

Slap. He hits his night stand, again.

"Agggghhh..." He groans as he slams on his alarm with dead hands. However, his arm knocks his alarm off the nightstand.

"Agggggghhhh..." Aiden groans even louder into his pillow. Feeling sluggish, his head becomes a slug's. Aiden lifts his head from his pillow, leaving behind a trail of slime. He rubs his head and can feel the ridges in his skin as his eyes extend out, sensing his surroundings. Looking at his cluttered nightstand, he grabs his phone and looks at the time. It is 7:00am on a Saturday, his day off. "It's too early for this," he

said to himself. He lets out a big sigh but ends up spilling more slime onto his bed, seeping into his sheet. “FUCK!!!” He screams and begins to panic as his head becomes a chicken’s head and feathers start to fall onto the floor. To any other Human, this is not a serious matter but let’s peer into Aiden’s mind. “SHIT SHIT SHIT, my mom is coming over tonight and she will judge me on every single minor mess in this place. Then she will complain all day that I am not responsible enough and should come back home. I am independent. I am 19. I got a job.” He frantically tosses his blanket, bedsheets, and pillow in his hamper. He shuffles on “a pair of jeans,” and a blueish gray “shirt” that says ‘1970’ in a bold font. He grabs his “rectangular glass slab” and rustles around for a “leather wallet” under a pile of clothes he took off from the night before as he runs out of his apartment with a hamper in hand. Note the words in quotation marks could have another name but it is outside of the Intergalactic Language frame of reference. However, we are able to surmise what these words might mean based on our context. Since we know that Humans are furless (mostly) except their heads, we surmise that “a pair of jeans” and “shirts” were some kind of textured grass draped on their bodies similar to another furless species that we are more familiar to us called the Gratins. We don’t know the significance of the “rectangular glass slab” and “leather wallet” that Humans carry around a lot. We know that Gratins carry small clay slabs wrapped in leather. Gratins use these slabs to take note of their surroundings for better scavenging of food. This is the prevailing theory of the Humans’ use of the “rectangular glass slab” and “leather wallet.”

As Aiden slides down three flights of stairs, he passes by a couple neighbors. His dog headed next door neighbor, Jim, is returning back to the apartment after working the nightshift at the gas station and looks dog tired. The neighbor below Aiden is a peacock-headed woman and her shrieking mockingbird-headed spawn are heading out for their morning walk. At the ground floor, he runs into the “UPS ” man whose head is a horse. He seems to be in a cheery mood, snorting and snickering to himself as he inserts the mail into the wall of mailbox slots. The UPS is a some sort of physical information relaying system. However, it is odd as Humans have a massive instant information system. We reached a theoretical conclusion that Humans are sort of phasing it out in favor of a teleportation system that is inferior but similar to ours. He dashes out his apartment door as he jogs to the “laundromat” a couple blocks down the street and his head shapes into an antelope’s. What is a laundromat? It is a place where Humans who lacked personal cleaning machines of their own clean their clothes in a shared public space. Why don’t Humans have their own private place to wash clothes? Humans live in places called cities in this era where they clump up in small but tall living quarters in order to be close to their tasks. Thus arose a shared cleaning place for clothes. The rushed demeanor of any Human in the big city who has somewhere to be changes their heads into those of fast animals, ranging from salmon to cheetahs, to increase their walking speed by 3.12 feet per step. This is a common thing that Humans can do and it is intentional. Even though there are times when Humans’ emotions can be off the rails, emotions can still be controlled to a degree. Thus, there is free will. But Humans believe in a god, an abstract controller of their will, and thrust all their blame on it to avoid responsibility for their actions. The most egregious proponent of this god theory is Human archeologist, Dr. Dskejitu, for writing about Humans and their psychology by referencing a book called the Bibble. All that remains of the Bibble now are tattered pages loosely bound together. However, we return to Aiden, who is dashing toward the “laundromat.”

As he passes by other Humans with various animal heads, Aiden manages to get to the “laundromat” in record time as his head shifts into a panting dog. He drops his heavy hamper to the ground. Aiden looks around his surroundings to see which “washing machines” are open. Aiden could see an elderly turtle-headed lady in a blue summer “gown,” (a stretch of long leaves) sitting in a glass booth, reading the newspaper. A hefty pig-headed man wearing blue “overalls” and white “t-shirt” is getting change from a “coin machine.” Two dog-headed children wearing matching tan “khakis” and blue and white striped “t-shirts” are running around the two aisles of back to back “washing machines.” A chirping sparrow-

headed lady wearing a black “t-shirt” and “jorts”(very short clothing around the groin and up to the legs) is pressing and writing into her “rectangular glass slab” as she tosses laundry into the machine. Aiden thought to himself, “I don’t really want to bother anyone today. I should go somewhere with no people and be as small as possible.” Aiden’s head turns into a mouse and he starts shuffling over to one to one of the corner machines. Aiden inserts three “coins” into a machine and pours some liquid in an open slot before closing it. The “coins” that Aiden uses are a disposable key to activate these “washing machines” and a “coin machine” to dispense these keys to anyone that needs them. This is quite different from our personal GDrivers that clean us and our garments in an instant. To take note is Aiden’s odd behavior, this is what Humans refer to as an “unsocial individual,” which is a Human not wanting to interact with other people unless provoked. According to “[www.DeviantArt.com](http://www.DeviantArt.com),” the common practice of meeting someone, at least for Humans, is to spread one’s hand and hit it against another Human’s hand. This is quite barbaric as it is a way to inflict damage onto a friend, or loved one. This was very different from our greetings that don’t require any physical contact but to speak through our minds to alert everyone of our presence. He then presses some buttons before the “washing machine” starts to churn and rumble, cleaning the clothes in a chewing motion. Aiden stares at the machine as it vigorously shakes. “That looks fun, maybe I should sit on it and see how it feels. I have never done it since I was a kid. I mean, what is stopping me now,” he thought. Aiden sits on the machine. He feels calm and content as the machine vibrates his body, his head turning into a cat. “I felt so alone for a year now. Maybe I should go back home to my mom’s place but...” The machine stops and he continues to do his laundry. Another note, we refer to this technique as the Tinker Pose, a pose where the Human’s “butt” makes contact with a hard surface. This is also the pose where Humans release their excrement as seen on “[www.DevianArt.com](http://www.DevianArt.com).” We don’t know why they do this but we can only assume.

As Aiden finishes cleaning his clothes, the old tortoise stares at him, disappointedly. Imagine a stranger doing a Tinker Pose on your GDriver; it is not a fun time to the individual who owns it. Aiden, feeling self-conscious about sitting on the washing machine, slinks away from the old tortoise’s confronting glance and onto the street. His head turns into a penguin as he shuffles his feet back home. Aiden starts to take a detour into a coffee shop called Coco’s Coffee. This is a new place for Aiden. “I always wanted to try it but never got the chance,” he thought. Aiden grabs hold of the brass door handle and opens the glass doors. The smell of brewed coffee and baked pastries wafts into Aiden’s nose, and just as suddenly, escapes into the streets as he enters the cafe. Enticed by the smell, Aiden goes in. He could see a line of people at the counter, some sitting down on homemade rustic furniture and conversing with each other, and some sitting down typing on their “laptops.” Laptops are fascinating devices that we don’t fundamentally understand. According to photographs, it is a thin slab similar to their rectangular slab but it can come apart. Aiden feels as if a hole is starting to form in his stomach, so he decides to stand in line and take note of the people around him. There are three people ahead of him: the one in front has a pig head, and the second and third have hyena heads, snickering and laughing with each other. Feeling a bit annoyed by their laughs, Aiden redirects his attention around the room. He sees two people with cow heads talking to each other while slowly slipping their coffee and munching on their bread. He sees a bee-headed individual, engrossed and writing on their “laptop.” He could see an old goose, taking a sip of her coffee. Finally, Aiden is at the front of the line and feeling so hungry that he could eat a horse; his head turns into a wolf. As he was about to ask for the Grease Panini Supreme, the old goose honks and screams at the bee-headed lady working the register. She dramatically gets up and walks up to her. Our Human, Aiden, is in pain. His vision starts to blur and the argument between Bee and Goose starts to be muffled as his thoughts start to take over.

“I am so hungry. Why is this person stopping me? Why is this happening to me now? I didn’t

bother anyone today. Why me? Who is this bitch? I think I will push her because she is bothering me and the cashier." Now, this angry hunger may seem mundane to us since we get our nutrients from non-commercial bars. However, the average Human needs to consume twice its body weight on account of the amount of energy to shift heads. So we can conclude that this situation is a stake of survival and he must push a lady to do it.

But before he could commit to his thoughts, the ground shakes as a huge bear-headed man wearing the same uniform as the cashier with the tag "manager" comes to the front. Aiden's head turns into a mouse as he looks around for an exit, away from this confrontation unfolding. However, he notices that everyone else's head in the cafe turns into a meerkat, looking into the direction of the confrontation. We don't know why Aiden goes so far to avoid confrontation as the records of him can only go so far and he is the most documented Human we have. So we, once again, turn to the Gratins for an idea of his avoidance behavior. We found that Gratins have a natural enemy called Madgans, a hairy sea beast with many appendages and can read and control conscious thoughts. We assume that Aiden is being controlled by a creature similar to Madgans because avoidance behavior and paranoia are the first symptoms of being underneath the Madgans' influence. Goose honks about her drink being decaf while Bear growls that he can't find it on the register. However, our Human, Aiden, wants to ignore that. He is hungry. He is tired. He wants his food and it feels like it will be out of his reach forever. Amongst all of the audio that he had mentally drowned out, one high pitch note sticks out. He turns and sees the cashier waving him down. He thinks to himself, "my savior has come to help me." He shuffles over and orders his food as the old goose is kicked out of the cafe.

.....

Aiden walks out of the cafe with complimentary pastry in hand and bagged lunch and hamper in the other. He thinks to himself, "maybe, that cafe ain't too bad. I should go back there again." He looks up at the sky and sees it is clear and sunny today. "Maybe I shouldn't rush today. Let's enjoy this weather a bit more." He decides to take another detour into the park on his way home. As the sun warms up his head, he feels a sense of calm and warmth over his entire body. His head changes into a cat. He takes in the wind patting him on the back. The leaves rustle as the wind brushes through them; the faint smell of grass hits his nostrils. He hears people talking to each other as they pass him. "It is so peaceful," he says to himself. He wishes that it can all last forever but there can only be so much time until Aiden has to go back and organize his apartment from this morning. All Humans have limited time on Earth and every Human knows this well. However, our Human Aiden is making the most of it. As he comes upon a shaded bench, he brushes away the leaves and dirt before sitting down. He unpacks his bagged lunch and munches on it as he feels the breeze.

It may be weird to think of Humans with this kind of light. From all the records that we have of Humans, we found Humans to be a race of conquerors, artisans, inventors, and scholars. They were restless and maybe they kept that trait until the end. However, seeing the thoughts of this particular Human with this particular lens challenges our preconceived notions. Do Humans want to strive for these peaceful scenes? Or do Humans want to shape their world around them? Are Humans even similar to us? Either way, this warrants further investigation on the true nature of Humans. Human enigma poses an uncertain threat to us, the Intergalactic Federation of Unique Life. They seem to have a rich culture, technology, and knowledge that is beyond our comprehension. And yet, they went extinct. We don't know the true cause of their downfall, as a star going nova should be avoidable. Thus I propose to any individual who reads this to support our cause for the Intergalactic Federation of Unique Life and fund our Human investigation campaign. 🐼



By Cas Keteyian

Do the words “Archie’s weird fantasy” mean anything to you?

Do you want to know more about how Riverdale is secretly a decades-long con by one brave man to make Archie Andrews gay?



i love you roberto aguirre-sacasa <3

I have information, and I am willing to share. Meet me at midnight on the night of the full moon, or hang around in the shadows of F2 until I notice you. Let me spread the gospel.



^^me n you talking about the riverdale longcon 🐑



By Cas Keteyian

could a straight man do THIS??? a visual study of brad pitt's filmography

ENTERTAINMENT

## 'Inception' Star Tom Hardy: I'm An Actor, Of Course I've Had Gay Sex



hes looking at a man here





I love this. This is something Brad just added. He handed him the beers and then swatted him on the ass. It's a girlfriend moment, "Hey, honey, you're looking good. Take these beers in to the boys."

- David Fincher, Fight Club Commentary



# Section Gate

## Pumpkin Bread Recipe for Fall Vibes

Peter Lampropoulos

- One fresh squash/pumpkin (I like Red Kuri best, though you can also use Hubbard, any kind of Butternut, Jarrahdale, Musquée de Provence, Kabocha, Long Island Cheese, Rouge Vif d'Etampes - there are plenty of choices, but you mustn't ever use canned pumpkin. We're not savages, now.)
- 1/4 cup extra dark maple syrup (who even uses the light stuff anyway? Psychopaths.)
- 2 large eggs (they needn't be jumbo)
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil (anything as long as it isn't fake. I like sunflower oil in this case.)
- 1/2 cup light brown sugar (I didn't realize how political the issue of labeling brown sugar is - it should resemble, say, raw sienna), packed
- 2 tablespoons fresh orange zest (or, if oranges aren't in season, 1/4 teaspoon orange extract)
- 2 cups all-purpose flour (you can use a 1:1 gluten free flour; I do so successfully.)
- 2 teaspoons baking powder (this helps it stay airy)
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda (I don't really know, but just go with it)
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon ground clove
- Some butter, for lubrication (I know what you're thinking, get your mind out of the gutter)
- Optional: a healthy sprinkling of chocolate chips, or 1/4 cup whiskey, or both

Roast your squash in the oven, face-up at 375°F, until very tender (approximately 45 minutes, perhaps longer. Just be patient, k?) Drain any excess liquid, scoop out the flesh and either purée in a food processor or (if you want to be sophisticated) mash it with a fork until smooth. Measure a cup of purée (a scant cup, if adding whiskey) and do something else with the rest (you can make pudding, risotto, ravioli, pie, ice cream, and lots of other things that I can't think of right now - you can also make more pumpkin bread).

Place a rack in the center of the oven and set the temperature to 350°F.

In a bowl, whisk together the squash purée, eggs, oil, brown sugar, orange zest (or extract), and maple syrup. (This is where you would add whiskey, if you're using it.)

Into the same bowl sift all the dry ingredients and stir the batter until combined. (And this is where you would fold in chocolate chips.)

Lubricate a loaf pan (shut up) with the butter you should have set aside, and pour in the batter. Place your soon-to-be pumpkin bread into the center of the oven. Bake for an hour, or until a toothpick comes out clean (with the whiskey, it may take a bit longer to cook in the center). Let cool before turning out onto a plate and serving. (Though it's best if eaten still warm.)

Use for all of your pumpkin bread-related needs. 🍁



By Alex Robinson

If I saw that  
man, I would  
run right  
towards him



By Juliana Saxe

Commencement

prezzy  
boy eddy  
prezzy  
boy eddy



By Nicholas Utakis-Smith



Hate

By Jay Poggi



## Hardcore Happenings

By Broden Grimm

Since arriving at Hampshire for the first time this fall, I have decided to say yes to as many things as I can. Sometimes this is saying yes to sneaking into a UMass dining hall or sometimes it is saying yes to pushing a wheelbarrow through the woods. However, most of the time it is saying yes to going to a concert with my friend Einar. Which always ends up with getting my ass kicked in a mosh pit. Most of the time they send me a flyer to a show and ask “hey dude, wanna go see some bands this weekend?” The bill always consists of bands that are legendary in the Massachusetts hardcore scene, none of which I have ever heard of before. The fonts of these bands’ logos always look like spider webs that would cut your skin if you ever touched them. The heavy riffs and brutal breakdowns of the music entrap your ears and that part of your brain that says “KILL KILL KILL” like a fly. At every show I’ve gone to, I feel like the next meal for a guy who is three times as big as me currently crowd killing in the pit. Eventually I get caught by the web and move to the edge of the pit, receive a kick to the head, and then a big smile pops up on my face.

The second night I was at Hampshire I skipped part of orientation to go to Worcester with Einar. During the whole car ride I was practicing how to pronounce Worcester like how the locals do. We arrived at this part of town that felt very menacing and bleak. Boarded up windows, graffiti, and rust surrounded us. A very different look compared to the Midwest I’ve grown up in. We only had to walk a couple blocks down to the record store the show was being hosted at. Immediately my eyes are drawn to the ghoulish characters wearing all black and chain smoking cigarettes outside of the gig. We walked up some rotting wooden steps to the entrance and we were greeted by one of the biggest men I have ever seen. He had three coffins tattooed upon the top of his forehead. This was a good sign that music waiting for us inside would be what we had come in search of. Einar and I squeeze past the behemoth to be greeted by a much smaller man eating pizza. Once we paid for admittance, he crossed fat X’s upon the tops of our hands just like the one on Einar’s watch. The record store was divided into two rooms by walls that didn’t connect to the ceiling. A room full of merch and a packed room where a band was currently playing. We trail blazed our way through the crowd consisting of the kind of people your parents wouldn’t let you hang out with. We found our way to the front of the crowd and the edge of the night’s spectacle. The lead singer of the opener had already removed his shirt and was drenched in sweat. His vocals assaulted you as the driving forces of the bass and drums pummeled you, only to have the guitar welcome you with a low growl and the rare melodic shrieking. The only thing keeping us from being spit on by the band was about seven bruisers spin kicking and two stepping in a circle. I was overcome with cultural shock as I watched my friend join them with swinging fists. I am seeing all of this happen while also trying to keep my most vulnerable organs safe.

As the night grows darker so does the music as more bands play their war chants. After observing from far, I had finally felt ready to join the brawl in front of me. The pit had turned into the shoving match I was more accustomed to back in Minneapolis. I jumped in and was quickly met by the feeling of the crowd’s collective sweat. During all the pushing, shoving, rib bruising, falling down, and getting back up I had never felt more loved by a group of strangers. There was more love in that pit than there were piercings and stick n’ poke tattoos combined. This was defined by one single moment. In the midst of a breakdown, the aforementioned behemoth grabs someone much smaller than him, threw them up into the air and caught them on the way back down. Many moments like this had occurred throughout the show. In one instance of mania, all the mongrels of the pit stopped what they were doing only to get down on the ground and spontaneously do push-ups. This group effort was also joined by



the accumulation of holes being put into the walls of the record store. Eventually someone had to grab the microphone just to say “protect the walls otherwise we are gonna get kicked out!” The only time the clashing of skulls stopped was between sets when everyone who was still able to walk stepped outside to suck down another cigarette. Even people who didn’t smoke couldn’t help but to follow them out. The venue had slowly been brought to a boiling point by the heat of the collective breath of the audience. The only escape from the soup like air was a small doorway back out to the rotting steps. Einar and I took advantage of this break to guzzle down some much needed water.

The climax of our night came with the appearance of the band Trauma Kit and their huge stacks of amplifiers. They looked ready to turn everything inside out and to demolish anyone that dared to move. Their lead singer had dawned a black leather fetish mask with huge metallic zippers. This was joined by his black shorts, beads of sweat, and the even blacker tattoos covering his skin. The songs they played, despite being in typical hardcore style and composition had a somber tone. After the first few songs of their set were performed, the truth was let out. Heads were hung long as the man in the leather mask revealed to the audience that a member of Trauma Kit had died just a week earlier. Their late guitarist Arson, had sadly fallen victim to life’s chaos and passed away in a car crash. Someone behind the band had raised up a flag that had shown an image of Arson playing his instrument of choice. Arson’s name was also displayed in the enchanting spiderweb font that hardcore and metal bands alike lay claim to. The crowd erupted into a chant proclaiming “ARSON ARSON ARSON” on repeat. Suddenly I heard a visceral sobbing from a woman behind me who I had later found out was the deceased’s girlfriend. Regrettably, I had misheard his name and was chanting “CARSON!” right in front of this grieving woman. Then the band played the slowest tempo song of the night. A sad melody that you knew was in honor of their missing member. It was so moving, that after the band picked up the pace again, the pit engulfed the room and tore apart the walls once again. All fifty of us were out to avenge Arson in the only way we knew how, by kicking eachothers asses. 🐑

*“Well, The Climax was...  
not good.”*

-IDA KAO, TO ERIK BENAU (Fo3),  
MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES,  
OCTOBER 15, 2021 🐑

## *Perry's Greatest Mission Yet*

*A tale of passion*

*By Isaiah Woods*

The corporal had been in a rather ornery state all week, and not without good reason. The evil Dr. Doofenshmirtz had been causing chaos at an especially high level, even for his dastardly self.

"Agent P, I've been waiting nearly an hour. Where the hell were you?!?" Growled the corporal in his, gruff, rugged voice.

Perry the (incredibly attractive) platypus responded in a manner typical of himself, by emitting a nonverbal trill reminiscent of that of other monotremes.

"I see. Well, don't let it happen again." Replied the corporal, his voice oozing with masculinity. "Now, you're going to want to hold on to your hat, Agent P, because this week Doof has been ESPECIALLY active."

Perry sighed. He was getting too old for this shit.

"Our intelligence has led us to believe that Doofenshmirtz evil inc. has been rapidly erecting a gigantic phallic structure on the western perimeter of the tri-state area. While we have yet to understand the purpose of said phallic structure, we have observed that it is NOT Ribbed for her pleasure. I repeat NOT ribbed for her pleasure"

"Just like that bastard." Thought Perry to himself. That vaguely germanic cunt was always finding new ways to overlook the female orgasm, and occasionally actively claiming it to be a myth. Perry let out a determined trill, indicating his understanding of the situation. He would make it his mission to go and check it out.

"God speed, Agent P, god speed."

It was not until later that evening that Perry arrived at the massive priapic. While lacking in texture, Perry did have to acknowledge the sheer grandeur of the piece. It was BIG. Bigger than anything Perry had seen before, and Perry had seen things. Things he would like to forget. Back in Nam... He snapped back to reality. He couldn't go back, not now, not ever.

He proceeded to delicately lubricate his sleek blue body in Worcestershire sauce, in order to smoothly slither throughout the labyrinthine ducts and vents of Doof's penile fortress. The scent of the condiment repulsed him personally, but he was well aware of Doof's fondness for the sauce (as he had once viewed the man chug a jar of the stuff at one of his infamous masked galas). Perry took great pleasure at the thought of teasing Doof's senses, as he knew all too well that he would be unable to resist the magnetic quality of his garlicky musque.

The labyrinthine vents that weaved throughout the structure were tight, dark, and moist. Despite this, Perry wiggled his way through, like an earthworm desperately making its way to the earth's muddy surface on a rainy afternoon. While to some this activity would be considered nightmarishly claustrophobic, Perry didn't mind. He actually rather enjoyed the sense of claustrophobia, as it took him back to his days as an embryo, calmly marinating in the biological juices of the egg from which he hatched.

After what seemed like an eternity, our sexy hero had reached his destination: the tip of the monolith. And sure enough, there, in plain view, stood the beautiful, slender form of his target: the one and only Heinz Doofenshmirtz. Perry gazed down upon his arch nemesis in a burning combination of spite and lust. Sure, this was the man who had made his entire life a living hell, but what would he be without him? Just another platypus living in the Australian outback? (A life which he had long since left behind.) A deep sigh. He didn't know how many of these missions that he had left in him.

After a few more moments of passion-laced spywork, Perry decided it was time to bite the bullet and confront his adversary. Gracefully, he propelled himself out of the vent, like a well lubricated platypus exiting an air vent, landing on all fours with the exaggerated swagger of a cerulean marsupial. Nearly instantaneously, the hunky platypus erected himself into an upright stance, striking a position of total badassery with great aplomb.

The hunched-back scientist looked upon his sworn rival in a look of utter befuddlement. “What in god’s name could a platypus be doing here?” He pondered. While Doofenshmirtz was relatively ignorant in the ways of platypi, his razor sharp scientific instincts were telling him that they were not native to the tri-state area.

“A well lubricated platypus?” He exclaimed in a confused timbre (Which was completely understandable, as while Doofenshmirtz was an expert in lubed-up small mammals, marsupials were slightly out of his wheelhouse).

“Is this motherfucker for real?” Thought Perry to himself. “After all of these years, after all that we’ve been through, does he really not recognize me?” A single tear slowly sunk down the monotreme’s face. But this was no time for tears, it was a time for action.

Perry gracefully produced his trademarked fedora from an unknown orifice, and donned it with the grace and precision of a forties film-noir star. “*PERRY* the well lubricated platypus?” proclaimed the doctor with an air of perplexity? However, he had at last recognized the marsupial for what he was: his sworn nemesis. The diminutive creature that had time, and time again foiled his plans was standing right there before him, challenging every last crumb of his integrity. But he wasn’t going to foil his brilliant plans. Not this time, and not ever again.

As quick as a very punctual snail, Doofenshmirtz grasped hold of a large, veiny lever, which protruded from the floor between his voluptuous legs, which he then proceeded to promptly pull with his calloused, yet oddly feminine hands. And just like that, Perry was trapped. His limbs were sprawled out like the hands of a clock by a series of ornate leather bonds, a ball gag placed carefully within the alluring chasm that was his bill.

“Well, well, well, look what the platypus dragged in. You know, because you are a platypus” he clarified, sheepishly.

Perry began to forcefully struggle against the lashes that were so cruelly restraining him, but alas the doctor’s vast knowledge of shibari insured Perry’s sedentariness.

“Behold my greatest invention yet: the ejaculator!” He said, indicating a menacing looking piece of machinery, “But I hardly need to tell you what it does, if I remember correctly you are well acquainted with an early prototype...”

Perry froze. No. It couldn’t be. He had sworn that it was nothing more than a dream. He had been drunk, and in a night of passion he must have let himself slip. Now, for the first time in his life, the cyan cheeks of the platypus turned bright red.

“Don’t worry, Perry the platypus, I didn’t lure you here to blackmail you. We need to talk.”

“Talk? TALK?” What could this man, who had spent his entire life antagonizing an entire geographic region, possibly want to talk about? Perry secreted a palpable silence indicating his full attention.

“Perry the platypus...I’m pregnant, and it’s yours.”

“Holy shit! I’m going to be a father?!?” Thought Perry to himself? He had to be dreaming. The world around him

“I ran the tests five times. I know this may be sudden, but I think... I think I want to keep it...” confessed the now visibly blushing scientist.

A tear ran down Perry’s face. He had always wanted a son. But how could he possibly raise a child in a world as fucked up as this? He attempted to verbalize his conundrum, however, no matter how hard he tried, his spherical muzzle quelled any attempt at speech. But Doofenshmirtz could understand his marsupial inamorato sans vocalization.

“Shhh. Why ask questions when you know you won’t like the answer?” Said the doctor, carefully removing the platypus’s bonds. Perry pontificated upon this query. He was about to speak, but promptly stopped himself. This wasn’t a time for thinking, but a time for passion. Without hesitation, the two imbibed each other in a display of animalistic passion, so obscene that any description would probably end in my public execution, so I will cop out and let you use your imagination. But I would like to leave you with one final image of passion: A throbbing twelve inch platypus cock flopping around in all of its marsupial glory.

You’re welcome ;) 

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